



Friends of Manzanar

SPRING 2009



RESTORED MESS HALL IN JANUARY 2009

Help Reconstruct Block 14!



This drawing of a Manzanar block appeared in the *Manzanar Free Press* in April 1942. Later an ironing room was placed where the oil tank is shown, and the oil tank was located nearer the mess hall.

Manzanar National Historic Site plans to reconstruct eight of the original buildings on its demonstration block (historic Block 14) so that visitors can better understand the conditions in which Japanese American detainees lived during World War II. A period mess hall (pictured above) has been almost completely restored.

Next in priority is reconstruction of barracks buildings 1 and 8. Friends of Manzanar is delighted to learn that federal funding may be made available for the two barracks. But the funding would not cover planned reconstruction of the men's and women's latrines, the laundry and ironing rooms, or the recreation hall, or interpretive work such as signs and displays.

The Park Service has asked Friends of Manzanar to help it complete this important project. To make this happen we need your generous contributions to Friends of Manzanar!



Friends of Manzanar works with the National Park Service and other interested groups to preserve and restore the Manzanar site, and to interpret its stories, resources and lessons, for this and future generations.

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Friends of Manzanar
Post Office Box 357
Independence, CA 93526

FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

Let's reach higher!

An important lesson for a National Park Service employee who has just stepped into a superintendency is that size doesn't matter...size of park, that is... The Yosemite, Grand Canyons and Great Smoky Mountains, though on a type of pedestal because of their iconic status, may actually pale to the Manzanars, Little Rock Central High Schools, Booker T. Washingtons...

Development is continuing to gobble up tract after tract in our country, so our careful stewardship of our natural areas—our parks, forests, wildlife refuges and preserves—is so vital. However, we must continue a more important type of development, that of our collective human spirit; not just in the sense of being able to consciously provide for the conservation of our natural resources, but to enhance our inner growth as individual members of humankind.

We must first climb the rung on the ladder to become more caring and more tolerant of one another's uniqueness, then step up to become absolutely accepting of all, pull ourselves up to the point of completely working together, hand in hand—then can we finally hope to be able to bound up the remaining rungs to the multiplicative effects of synergy and a more perfect world for humanity.

A good deal of our growth can come from learning the lessons of our NPS units, e.g. Manzanar, Brown v. Board of Education NHS, Andersonville NHS, Trail of Tears NHT, etc. Thank you for seeking out our parks and for your support of our parks.

Along with my coworkers at Manzanar, I'm learning to climb the ladder. Come join us and let's all reach higher and higher.

Les Inafuku

Les Inafuku was named Manzanar's fourth superintendent in the fall of 2008, coming to us from an assignment on the Big Island of Hawai'i. Aloha Les!



LES INAFUKU

A Donor's Thank You Note

Dear Lillian & Dennis, co-chairs,

On our bus trip on February 13, we visited the Manzanar, for the second time in two years for me. It was a cold day, icy wind flowing down from the high peak. — I felt it was what these Japanese-Americans endured during the unfortunate days.

Although we could not look around because of the weather, I noted some improvement since my last visit in March 2007. As I am unable to volunteer, a small contribution is hereby enclosed. Also, I am telling all my friends to visit Manzanar to know the history as well as to admire the beauty of the site. The photos on the Newsletter are very moving.

Thank you for your effort to improve the Manzanar.

*Sincerely,
Sonoko Ohwaki*

This February 2009 personal note from Friends of Manzanar donor Sonoko Ohwaki to Friends co-chairs Lillian Kawasaki and Dennis Otsuji moved us, just as the photographs in the Fall 2008 newsletter moved her. We wanted to share her gracious note with you.

She speaks of a "small contribution." Over our first five years, during which we have relied heavily on responses by individuals to our brochures and newsletters, donors have contributed amounts ranging from less than \$10 to more than \$15,000. In our view, every contribution is a big contribution, and the spirit that moves the donor to give is even bigger, and we could not reach the goals we share with our donors and with Manzanar National Historic Site without every donation. As we proceed with our campaign for reconstruction on Block 14 we will inevitably seek more and larger contributions, but we will always remain deeply grateful for every contribution regardless of its amount.

And a note such as this is of great value to us too, because it tells us that the lessons of Manzanar, and their relevance today, are being heard and understood. Our deepest thanks to Sonoko Ohwaki for her kindness.



JANUARY 2009

The State of the Site:

Congress established Manzanar National Historic Site, in 1992, "to provide for the protection and interpretation of the historical, cultural, and natural resources associated with the relocation of Japanese-Americans during World War II" Its mission statement



REPLICA OF ORIGINAL CAMP SIGN

declares that the site "preserves the stories and resources of Manzanar for this and future generations. . . . [T]he park will stimulate and provoke a greater understanding of, and dialogue on civil rights, democracy, and freedom."

In the years since the site was created, Manzanar National Historic Site and its partners in the private sector have worked steadily to implement this mission. High points along the way included the opening of the site's interpretive center in the former



INTERPRETIVE CENTER IN 2009

camp auditorium in 2004 and reconstruction of guard tower #8, along Highway 395, in 2005. In 2009, as observance of the 40th annual Manzanar Pilgrimage approached, signs of accelerated progress were visible everywhere on the site.

High wind has always been part of the natural setting of Manzanar. In the years since World War II, and particularly once the

"relocation center" buildings were removed, sand borne by the wind has buried many of the artifacts of the World War II period. First-rate archeological work has uncovered many of these artifacts. One of the latest examples was the recovery, in late 2008, of ponds and foundations at the garden complex last known as Merritt Park, just off the auto tour road between Blocks 33 and 34. Even the turtle prominent in one of Ansel Adams'



MERRITT PARK IN 2009

photographic images from World War II is again visible.

The mess hall on Block 14 is substantially completed and was expected to be open to visitors by the time of the Pilgrimage. Mess hall exhibits are being developed and built by Color-Ad, which has subcontracted planning and design to Krister Olmon Design, industrial designers who worked on the first-rate exhibits in the interpretive center.

In March, volunteers from Colorado State University and the University of Southern California removed the construction fence from around the mess hall and invasive vegetation from the rest of Block 14, all to prepare the site for reconstruction of two barracks, the men's and women's latrines, the laundry room and the ironing room and the recreation hall on Block 14. (See the drawing on page 1.) David Ballard of the National Park Service Design Center in Denver, who did design work for the interpretive center remodel, will provide designs for the buildings to be reconstructed on Block 14.

Thirteen temporary wayside exhibits were expected to be in place on the site in time for the Pilgrimage. (See an example on page 6.)

A Quick Look Around

Superintendent Les Inafuku says “they’ll look good enough to be permanent, but won’t be.” The permanent exhibit panels are in production by Bunting Graphics, and should be installed by the end of the fall.



1943 (NPS/KATSUMI TANIGUCHI COLLECTION)

Less visible but also integral to Manzanar’s mission is the site’s oral history partnership with Densho, the Seattle-based Japanese American Legacy Project whose goal is closely similar to Manzanar’s: “[T]o strengthen the protection of civil liberties by not letting people forget what happened to Japanese



1943 (NPS/KATSUMI TANIGUCHI COLLECTION)

Americans during World War II.” This three-year project (to which Friends of Manzanar donated seed money in 2006 and 2007) had compiled 66 videotaped interviews by mid-March 2009.

This spring Manzanar is collaborating with schools, libraries, museums and other partners in Inyo and Mono Counties for a “Community Reads” program in which local residents are encouraged to read *Farewell to Manzanar* by Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston



1943 (NPS/KATSUMI TANIGUCHI COLLECTION)

and James Houston and to attend special programs, events and exhibits at Manzanar and elsewhere in the two counties.

Manzanar is planning to install added insulation and ceiling fans in the interpretive center and a photovoltaic array on the roof.

Although it is not Manzanar’s own project Manzanar’s staff and partners look forward to broadcast of the Ken Burns/Dayton Duncan documentary film “The National Parks: America’s Best Idea” on PBS in the fall of 2009. Two related documentaries – a 45-minute film, “The National Parks: This is America,” and a short film specific to the Manzanar site, “Never Again” – will be shown in Lone Pine at Pilgrimage time, first at the Lone Pine Film Museum beginning at 7 p.m. Friday, April 24, and then again at the Manzanar At Dusk event at Lone Pine High School on Saturday evening, April 25.



MOUNT WILLIAMSON (NPS ARCHIVE)

Waiting in Beauty

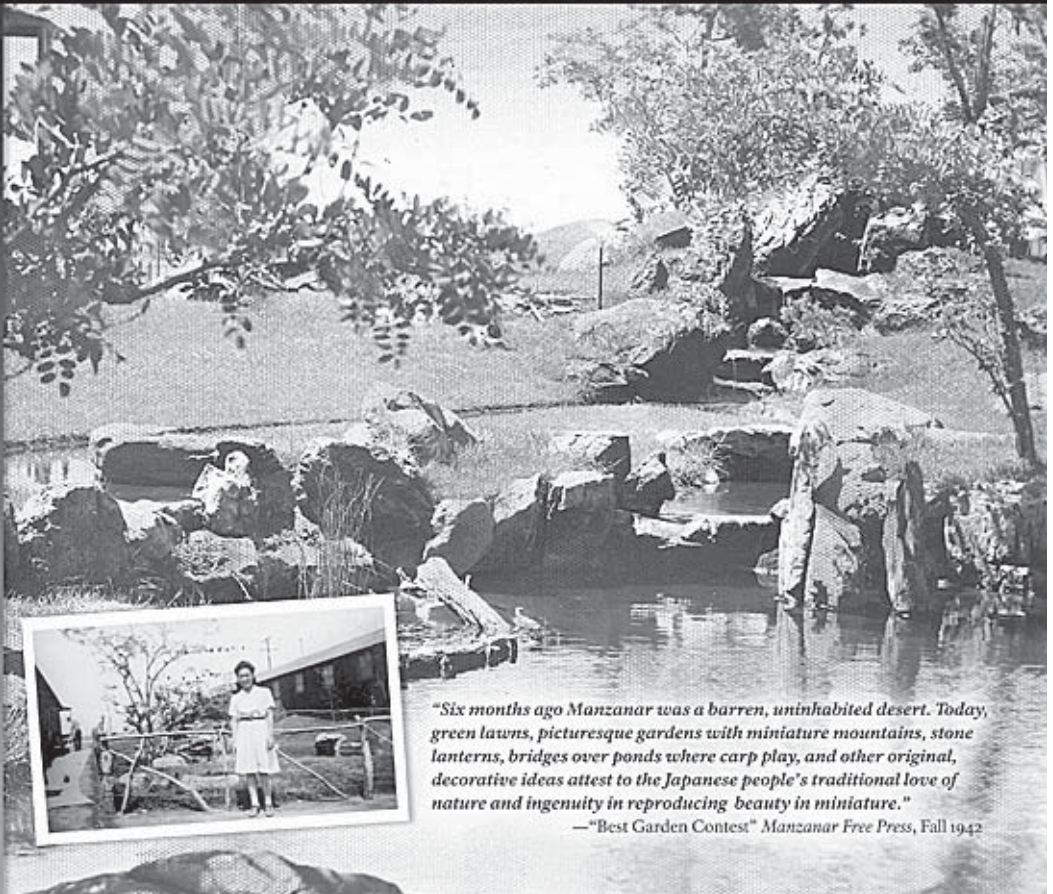
You are standing before *San-shi-en*, or 3-4 Garden. Water once flowed over these silent stones, soothing troubled spirits and easing the monotony of long mealtime lines. Designed and built by internees, mess hall gardens served as a source of block identity and pride.

This and other gardens in Blocks 9, 12, and 22, share symbolic roots in ancient Japanese design. In each, you will find three distinct levels aligned north to south: a hill of earth represents the mountains from which water flows south to a pond, symbolizing an ocean or lake. Here, internees planted trees from the camp nursery and hauled stones from the rugged Inyo Mountains to the east.

As you walk around the garden, look for the crane and turtle rocks. Found together, they are said to ensure ageless vitality.

Unearthing the Gardens

This pond was buried by sand and sediment for fifty years, until National Park Service archeologists unearthed it in 1999. They later excavated a mess hall root cellar to your left, reconstructed the historic fence, secured stones, and repaired and extended the mess hall sidewalk.



"Six months ago Manzanar was a barren, uninhabited desert. Today, green lawns, picturesque gardens with miniature mountains, stone lanterns, bridges over ponds where carp play, and other original, decorative ideas attest to the Japanese people's traditional love of nature and ingenuity in reproducing beauty in miniature."

—"Best Garden Contest" *Manzanar Free Press*, Fall 1942

WAYSIDE EXHIBIT AT BLOCK 34

New Wayside Exhibits at Manzanar

Beginning in April 2009, visitors to Manzanar will see the first of a planned total of 29 wayside exhibit panels designed to help them understand the significance and locations of many important features of the site. As an example, the panel pictured above shows, with contemporary photographs augmented by explanatory text, the beautiful mess hall garden in Block 34 as it appeared during World War II. Compare it to a 2007 view (below) from a similar

perspective across the recently-excavated garden site.

The Park Service plans to place one of its wayside exhibit panels on the demonstration block (historic Block 14) and to supplement the exhibit with up to six smaller panels to interpret specific features on the block as the Park Service works, with Friends of Manzanar's support, to reconstruct buildings on the block.

The Park Service expects to have 13 temporary panels in place in time for the 40th Annual Manzanar Pilgrimage on April 25. The temporary panels should be replaced with final panels by this summer. The panels are being written by Alisa Lynch, Jane Wehrey and Richard Potashin of Manzanar's Park Service staff, designed by Park Service designer Michael Larson, and fabricated by Bunting Graphics, a Park Service contractor. Panels for the demonstration block will be designed by Krister Olmon Design as part of the contract for interpretive exhibits in the reconstructed mess hall on the block.



Block 34 garden in 2007

Three Manzanar Partners

Manzanar Committee, Manzanar History Association, and Friends of Manzanar are three private-sector Manzanar partners whose activities focus directly on the Manzanar site. All three are tax-exempt nonprofit corporations.

Manzanar Committee, based in Los



Angeles, grew out of a group of about 150 people who made a pilgrimage to Manzanar in December 1969. Manzanar

Committee has sponsored

the annual Manzanar Pilgrimage ever since; the Committee was incorporated in 1976. Members of Manzanar Committee, including its longtime leader the late Sue Kunitomi Embrey (who was herself incarcerated at Manzanar during World War II), were instrumental in establishing Manzanar National Historic Site in 1992 and in the site's development thereafter.

Today Manzanar Committee "is dedicated to educating and raising public awareness about the incarceration and violation of civil rights of persons of Japanese ancestry during World War II and to the continuing struggle of all peoples when Constitutional rights are in danger." It works at a grassroots level, primarily through its annual Pilgrimage on the last Saturday of April and the annual Manzanar At Dusk program following the Pilgrimage. Manzanar Committee welcomes donations and maintains a comprehensive website at www.manzanarcommittee.org.

Manzanar History Association is the name under which Friends of the Eastern California Museum, incorporated in 1986, has operated the bookstore at the Manzanar National Historic Site interpretive center and supported the site's programs and educational activities.



The bookstore offers an excellent selection of books and gifts, sharing the proceeds of sale with the National Park Service. Inventory items can be purchased at the site

and soon will be available at a new online store at www.manzanarstore.com, and can be ordered by telephone at (760) 878-2411 or by email at manzanar.mha@suddenlinkmail.com.

From its share of sales proceeds and from dues, donations and grants, Manzanar History Association provides financial assistance to educational and interpretive programs and projects at Manzanar, managing many of these itself. It has brought author events and book signings, theater and music productions, speakers and temporary exhibits to the site, has funded projects such as the Educator Resources "Teacher Box" and a book, *Children of Manzanar*, and produces other materials for the benefit of Manzanar visitors.

Friends of Manzanar was incorporated



in 2004. It raises funds and provides other assistance to preserve and restore the Manzanar site and to educate the public.

In its restoration function Friends has funded reconstruction of Guard Tower number 8 at the site (a project for which, in 2006, it received awards from the California Preservation Foundation and from the Office of Historic Preservation of California State Parks), helped fund restoration of historic vegetation at the west entrance to the interpretive center, and provided financial support for Park Service Volunteer Day activities. Currently Friends' co-chair Dennis Otsuji, an award-winning landscape architect, is helping the Park Service plan a model Japanese garden at the east entrance to the Interpretive Center, and Friends has begun a campaign for donations to support the Park Service's farsighted plan to reconstruct buildings on Block 14.

In its education function Friends has helped fund oral history projects, has purchased and donated to Manzanar the valuable Katsumi Taniguchi photo collection, and has provided financial support to Manzanar Committee for its Manzanar At Dusk program.

Heartfelt Thanks to Our Generous Donors

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Michael Yoshida
Anonymous (2)

You can be involved!

Be a Manzanar volunteer. Contact Park Ranger Carrie Andresen-Strawn, at (760) 878-2194 ext. 2714 or Carrie_Andresen@nps.gov, for information.

Share Your Memories. If you were incarcerated at Manzanar or another camp, or were WRA staff or an MP, please share your story with us. Contact Park Ranger Richard Potashin at (760) 878-2194 ext. 2712 or Richard_Potashin@nps.gov.

Be a Friend of Manzanar. Your contributions to Friends of Manzanar directly benefit Manzanar National Historic Site. Thank you!



Yes! I/we want to help reconstruct the demonstration block at Manzanar.

Please choose your level of support:

- ☐ \$50
☐ \$100
☐ \$250
☐ \$500
☐ Other \$ _____

Name(s) _____

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